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Monkey with Mint Lips

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The Speed of This

So close to death
in a black miniskirt—
my legs clenching this machine.

I won't drive, but I huddle close
to trust a stranger with my life.

I can feel the ocean pulling us back
as we invent our escape
you have to run away with me
on this warm southern night.

Away from the city
away from the drunks and the lights—
I ride.

We are shooting sparks from the pavement
flying toward night's black wall
at the speed of this roaring sound

so fast I bite my lips
so they won't blow open into a scream

and we are racing toward it—
the most exquisite death

there are tears in my eyes
and my legs are shaking

so close to God
on a motorcycle
in a miniskirt.

Monkey with Mint Lips

And I bolted up in bed—
having been wrapped around Patrick like breathing ivy.

It was the light that triggered the wide eyes;
the shut door—the gun blast.

It was while laying in the dark talking about bunnies or ducks or something
equally mature, batting our eyelashes at each other's cheeks like spiders, avoiding
sentimentality at all costs, that my claws began to grow. And, perhaps sensing
my new sharpness, Patrick endeavored to the bathroom, that marvelous thing,
that unsanitary handicapped wonder. Dammed only by a plastic curtain, the
water from the shower would flood the entire room. A cesspool of festering
body crumbs and greasy dirty nasty, it was the sort you wear sandals on, "just
in case." I digress.

He shimmied with his tiny hips down the lopsided dance ladder, and at the
click of the lock and the trance of the fan (the one with the ladybugs eating
each other in it; and bees) I opened my new eyes.

It was from lying down sedated, along the cold wall in pathetic pajamas,
that I became perched, pretty shaven legs up against my bosom, flat-footed
balanced, swivel-necked big eyed, still.

And it was a perch, and I was invisible, and I was animal and hunting and
aware. Smooth owl-like head motions, eyes moving first, to the reaches of their
peripherals for small moving things; for snakes or bugs or fireflies, for the killer
from Kalamazoo to reach through the glass and part the blinds—

It was a kind of awareness that was soft, like being the wet emulsion side
of a photograph partially developed, like each blink was really a camera shot,
invisible but completely mortal, uncomfortable, unthinking, unconscious.

The clicks and ticks of kitchen things, the jitting of aimless Japanese beetles
against the ceiling, the silent sound of rustling, new frequencies.

I'm curious, ready for battle. I blink like my entire face is eclipsing, killer
moons with dead batteries, the luminous sparkle replaced with a dull wet
luster.

That I saw sad blinking eyes, that I heard scared bird breathing, I'd be a
hurting black death blur, paws poised for the chase, for the kill. The startled victim creature would hesitate, all at once scrambling under the sink, escaping only by racing around the detergent bottles. Slipping on scattered papers and losing speed, I'd arch my tail like a scorpion sting and snatch a tuft of fur from its hind leg, the effects of which would send it tumbling, dizzy and harrowed, shaking next to a pile of dirty clothes. I'd snatch it like a stolen toy and break its head off, toting the warm thing back up to my nest of handmade mother quilts and fake wood cross boards for the children.

That I saw sad blinking eyes. That I heard scared bird breathing.

A slowly widening sliver like hot butter of light jolts my eyes like they'd been fishing line hooked and yanked to sink the bait in, entire head swiveling and stopping, blinking, like this was something I could really vampire bite kill, really drag back to the nest for the kids with my sticky stinky pissed on tiny frog paws. It was Patrick, opening the bathroom door.

"I'm a tarsier," I whisper to him, perhaps batting an oddly human hand in a claw-like motion.

"No, you're crazy," he says, climbing up, bravely, deliriously.

As he settles in I have my final glances, scanning to see if the light had stirred any bugs, cocking my head to listen for the vain efforts of the easily dead, the one-two hops of frogs or the sliding crackle of a lizard tail on Ethics notes. The hunt fruitless, I honor the progressively concerned pleas from Patrick and resume my body, crawling back into place against the wall, wrapping back up together, sleep-sick branches, wondering.